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THE NEW MUTANTS™

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ARENA

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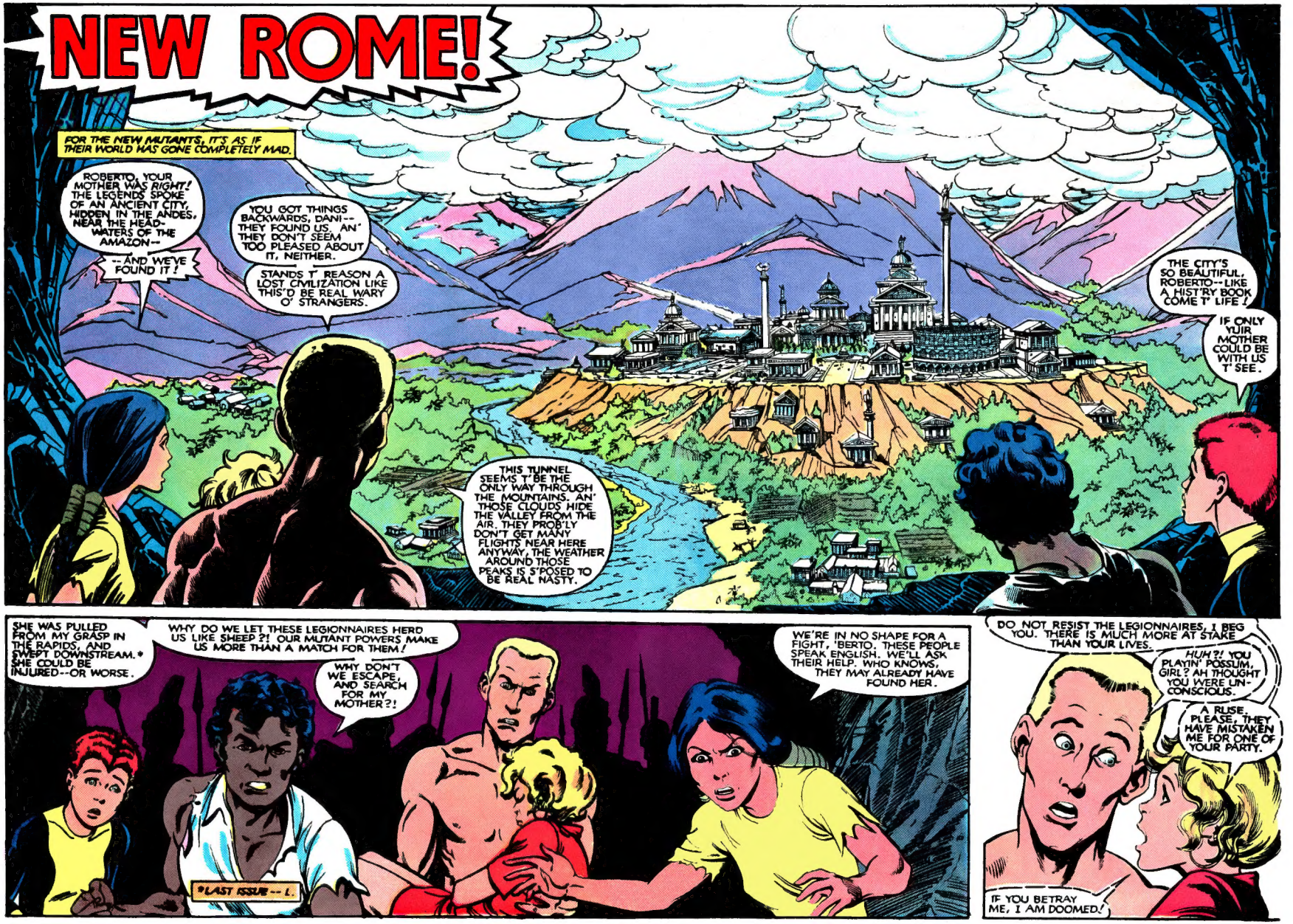

NEW ROME!
FOR THE NEW MUTANTS, IT'S AS IF THEIR WORLD HAS GONE COMPLETELY MAD.
ROBERTO, YOUR MOTHER WAS RIGHT! THE LEGENDS SPOKE OF AN ANCIENT CITY, HIDDEN IN THE ANDES, NEAR THE HEADWATERS OF THE AMAZON--
--AND WE'VE FOUND IT!
YOU GOT THINGS BACKWARDS, DANI--THEY FOUND US, AN' THEY DON'T SEEM TOO PLEASED ABOUT IT, NEITHER.
STANDS T' REASON A LOST CIVILIZATION LIKE THIS'D BE REAL WARY O' STRANGERS.
THIS TUNNEL SEEMS T' BE THE ONLY WAY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS. AN' THOSE CLOUDS HIDE THE VALLEY FROM THE AIR. THEY PROB'LY DON'T GET MANY FLIGHTS NEAR HERE ANYWAY. THE WEATHER AROUND THOSE PEAKS IS S'POSED TO BE REAL NASTY.
THE CITY'S SO BEAUTIFUL, ROBERTO--LIKE A HIST'RY BOOK COME T' LIFE!
IF ONLY YUIR MOTHER COULD BE WITH US T' SEE.
SHE WAS PULLED FROM MY GRASP IN THE RAPIDS, AND SWEPT DOWNSTREAM.* SHE COULD BE INJURED--OR WORSE.
WHY DO WE LET THESE LEGIONNAIRES HERD US LIKE SHEEP?! OUR MUTANT POWERS MAKE US MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM!
WHY DON'T WE ESCAPE, AND SEARCH FOR MY MOTHER?!
*LAST ISSUE -- L.
WE'RE IN NO SHAPE FOR A FIGHT, 'BERTO. THESE PEOPLE SPEAK ENGLISH. WE'LL ASK THEIR HELP. WHO KNOWS, THEY MAY ALREADY HAVE FOUND HER.
DO NOT RESIST THE LEGIONNAIRES, I BEG YOU. THERE IS MUCH MORE AT STAKE THAN YOUR LIVES.
HUH?! YOU PLAYIN' POSSUM, GIRL? AH THOUGHT YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS.
A RUSE, PLEASE. THEY HAVE MISTAKEN ME FOR ONE OF YOUR PARTY.
IF YOU BETRAY ME, I AM DOOMED!

UNFORTUNATELY, FOR ALL THEIR HIGH HOPES...

INSIDE, BARBARIANS. YOUR FATE WILL BE DECIDED ON THE MORROW.

THEY CERTAINLY ARE BEING HELPFUL, DANI.

I'M SORRY, 'BERTO.

RAHNE, CHECK THE DOOR FOR EAVESDROPPERS.

IMMEDIATELY, THE YOUNG SCOT SHIFTS TO HER HALF-HUMAN, HALF-LUPINE TRANSITIONAL FORM.

NO SOUND OR SCENT NEARBY, DANI. WE'RE ALONE.

EEEAUGHH!

THE *STENCH* O' THIS PLACE!

HOW CAN PEOPLE STAND SUCH FILTH?!

IT'S A DUNGEON, RAHNE. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE DISGUSTING.

MENINA, SOME EXPLANATIONS ARE IN ORDER.

MY NAME IS *AMARA JULIANA OLIVIA AQUILLA*.

MY FATHER IS *LUCIUS ANTONIUS AQUILLA*...

...FIRST SENATOR OF NOVA ROMA.

I AM TRULY SORRY ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, ROBERTO. I PRAY SHE IS STILL ALIVE--

--OR THAT HER DEATH WAS QUICK AND WITHOUT PAIN.

COULDN'T SHE BE IN THE CITY, AS DANI SAID?

IF SHE WERE, SHE WOULD BE HERE

BOBBY...

SAY NOTHING, SAM. I WANT NO SYMPATHY.

JUST LEAVE ME TO MY RAGE.

YOU WERE DISGUISED AS AN INDIAN WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU'RE DEATHLY AFRAID OF BEING DISCOVERED -- HARDLY THE BEHAVIOR OF A SENATOR'S DAUGHTER.

WE ARE NOT ALL ROMAN. MUCH OF THE CITY...

... IS DESCENDED FROM THE *INCAS*...

... WHO FLED HERE CENTURIES AGO, WHEN THEIR OWN LAND WAS CONQUERED. NOVA ROMA IS A REPUBLIC, BUT THE INCAS WERE AN ABSOLUTE MONARCHY. A FACTION HAS ARISEN SEEKING TO TRANSFORM ROME INTO THE SAME KIND OF IMPERIAL STATE.

I AM PART OF THE OPPOSITION TO THAT PARTY. IF MY FATHER'S ENEMIES LEARN OF MY ACTIVITIES...

... IT COULD RUIN HIM POLITICALLY, AND THE REPUBLICAN CAUSE WITH HIM.

WHY YOUR INTEREST IN MY MOTHER'S EXPEDITION?

AS SAM SURMISED, WE ARE WARY OF STRANGERS. NEW ROME HAS SURVIVED AS LONG AS IT HAS...

...SOLELY BECAUSE OF ITS ISOLATION.

I DON'T TRUST HER.

NOR DO I.

WHY?! WHAT'S AMARA DONE TO YOU?! IF SHE ISN'T TELLING US EVERYTHING, IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE SHE'S SCARED.

AH DON'T THINK SHE'S LIED TO US.

SHE'S NA' TOLD US THE TRUTH-- THE WHOLE TRUTH -- EITHER!

SHE'S INTENTIONALLY KEEPIN' STUFF BACK-- I CAN SENSE IT.

I WISH *PROFESSOR XAVIER* WERE HERE...

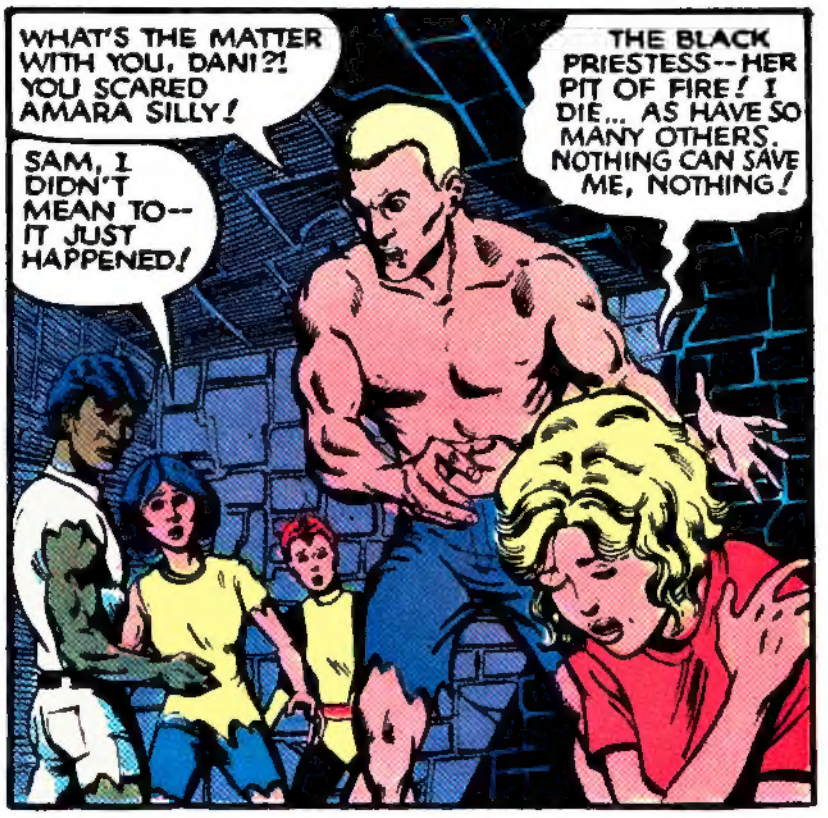
...OR I WAS A TELEPATH, LIKE HIM...

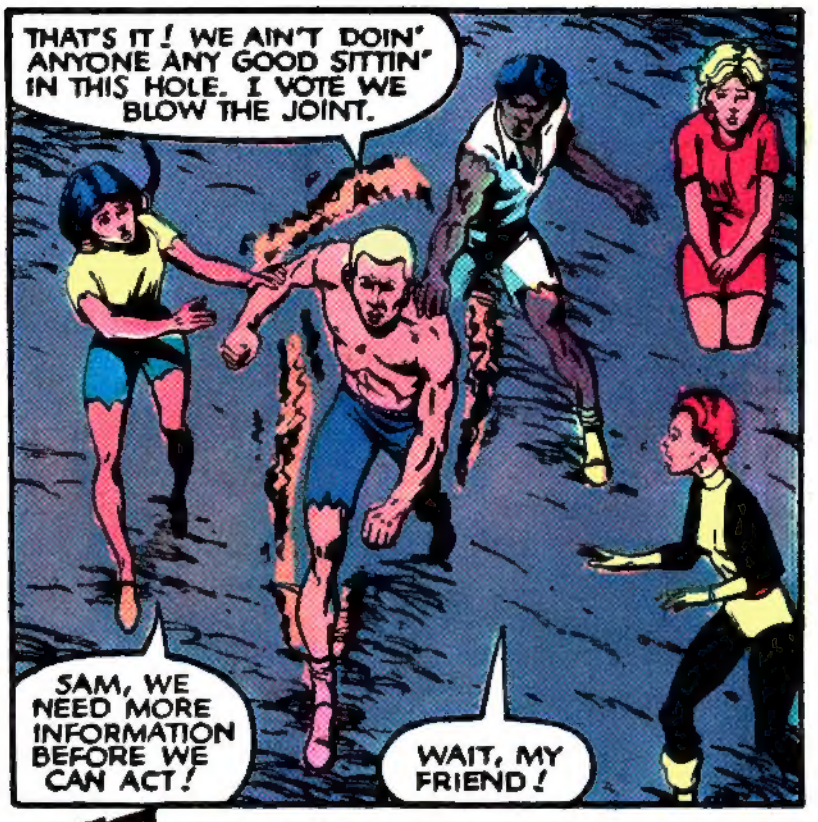
SUDDENLY, INEXPLICABLY, DANI'S PSI-POWER MERGES HER MIND WITH AMARA'S...

... FINDING THE GIRL'S MOST TERRIBLE NIGHTMARE...

...AND PROJECTING IT FOR ALL TO SEE.

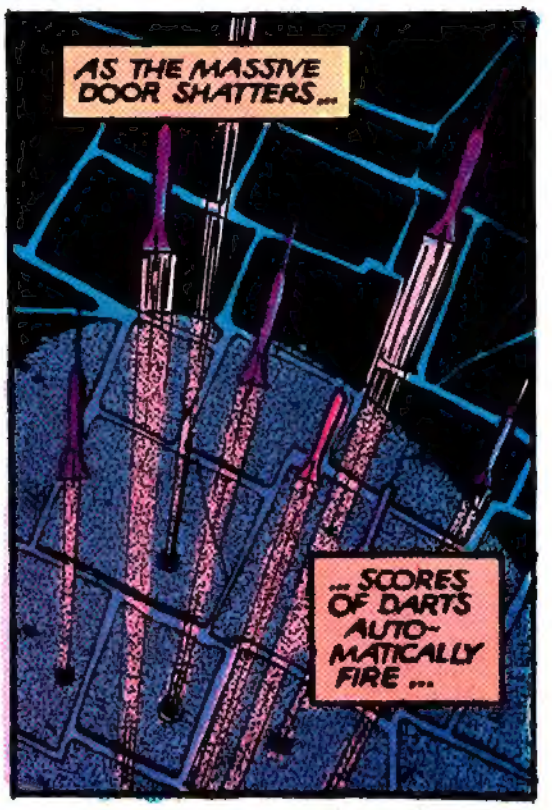
≥GASP!≤


WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, DANI?! YOU SCARED AMARA SILLY!
SAM, I DIDN'T MEAN TO-- IT JUST HAPPENED!
THE BLACK PRIESTESS--HER PIT OF FIRE! I DIE... AS HAVE SO MANY OTHERS. NOTHING CAN SAVE ME, NOTHING!

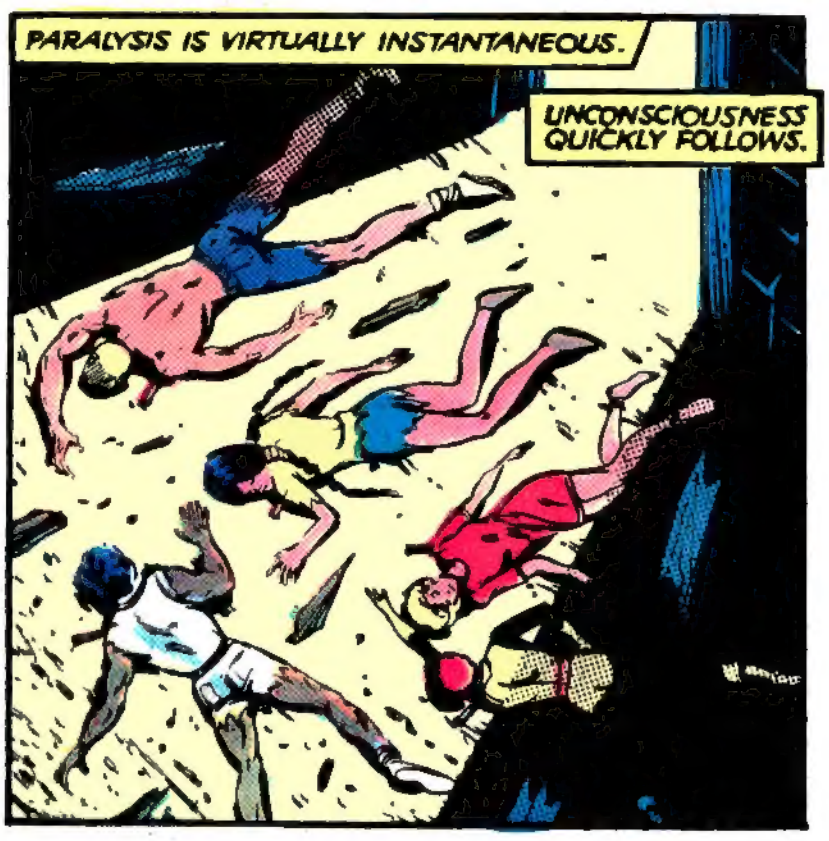

THAT'S IT! WE AIN'T DOIN' ANYONE ANY GOOD SITTIN' IN THIS HOLE. I VOTE WE BLOW THE JOINT.
SAM, WE NEED MORE INFORMATION BEFORE WE CAN ACT!
WAIT, MY FRIEND!

YOUR POWER IS UNFOCUSED. YOU COULD BRING THE WHOLE BUILDING DOWN ON TOP OF US.
IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME...
BY THE GODS-- ROBERTO, STOP! YOU MUSTN'T!!

POW!


AS THE MASSIVE DOOR SHATTERS...
...SCORES OF DARTS AUTO-MATICALLY FIRE...

...FROM PROJECTORS HIDDEN IN BOTH THE CELL AND THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE.
THEY ARE TIPPED WITH A CURARE DERIVATIVE.


PARALYSIS IS VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS.
UNCONSCIOUSNESS QUICKLY FOLLOWS.

MEANWHILE, IN THE SENATORIAL BATHS...

...WHERE THOSE AUGUST PERSONAGES GO TO REFRESH BODY AND SOUL AFTER A GRUELING DAY ON THE SENATE FLOOR, AND WHERE, IN THE PROCESS, MUCH OF THE REAL WORK OF GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY GETS ACCOMPLISHED...

〈 MARCUS DOMITIUS, A WORD WITH YOU?* 〉

〈 I'M IN RATHER A HURRY, AQUILLA. 〉

〈 URGENT STATE BUSINESS. 〉

*TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN-- L.

〈 HAVING TO DO WITH THE OUT-LANDERS CAPTURED THIS MORNING? 〉

〈 LORD GALLIO, HOW COULD HE HAVE KNOWN--?! 〉

〈 BE SILENT, CENTURION. 〉

〈 THEY'RE CHILDREN, I BELIEVE -- TWO BOYS AND THREE GIRLS, ABOUT MY DAUGHTER AMARA'S AGE. 〉

〈 YOUR SPIES KEEP YOU WELL INFORMED, AS ALWAYS. 〉

〈 I PREFER TO THINK OF THEM AS PATRIOTIC CITIZENS. 〉

〈 WHAT, PRAY TELL, ARE YOUR INTENTIONS TOWARDS THE PRISONERS? 〉

〈 THE LAW IS QUITE SPECIFIC, AQUILLA. IT MAKES NO PROVISION FOR AGE. 〉

〈 THE BOYS GO TO THE ARENA, AND IF THEY SURVIVE, THEY WILL JOIN THE GIRLS ON THE AUCTION BLOCK... 〉

〈... TO BE SOLD INTO SLAVERY. 〉

〈 SPLENDID! I KNOW THE COMMANDER OF OUR CIVIC GUARD WON'T FAIL TO DO HIS DUTY. 〉

〈 YOUR FAITH IN ME IS TOUCHING. 〉

〈 NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME... 〉

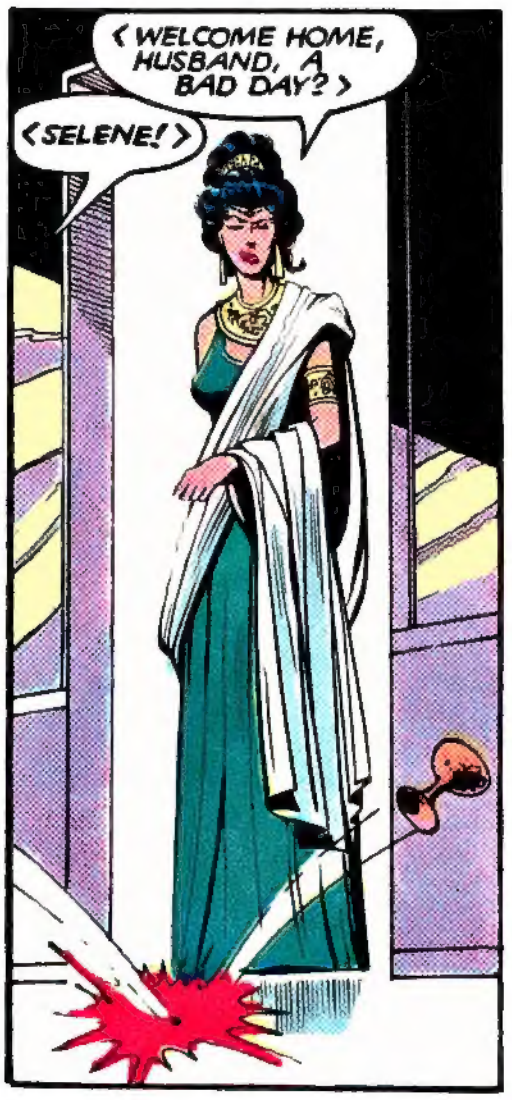
〈 YOU'D RATHER SEE ME IN THAT ARENA, EH, GALLO? I'M ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR AMBITION.

〈 AND IF I MUST SACRIFICE CHILDREN TO STOP YOU-- THEN I SHALL! 〉

〈PLUTO TAKE THAT FAT OLD MAN'S SOUL!〉
〈WINE! BRING ME WINE!〉

〈PLEBIAN PIG!〉
〈EVEN NOW, I'LL WAGER HE'S LAUGHING AT ME--〉
〈--AND AT HOW EASILY HE THWARTED MY PLANS!〉

〈BY ALL THE GODS, I SWEAR HE'LL PAY FOR THAT!〉


〈WELCOME HOME, HUSBAND, A BAD DAY?〉
〈SELENE!〉

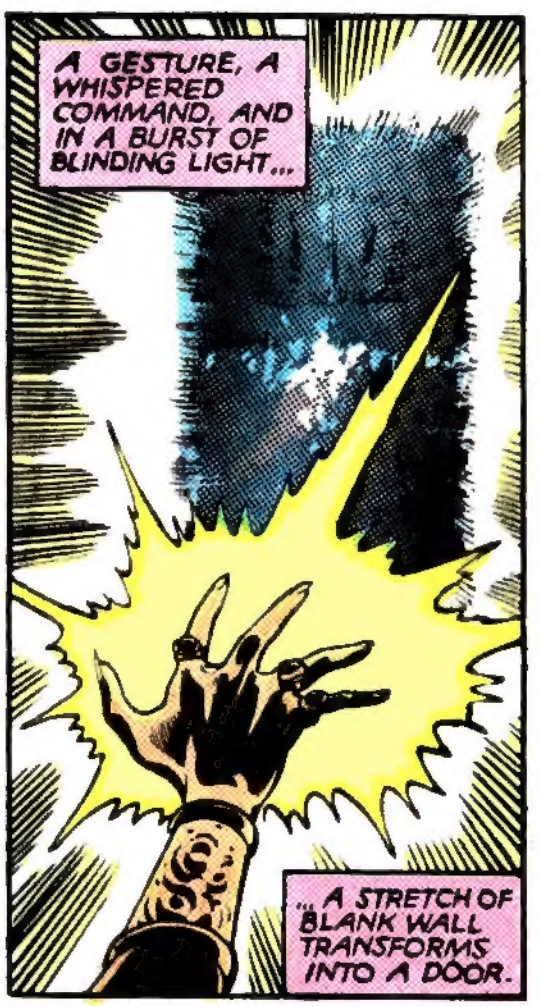
〈OCTAVIAN CAPTURED SOME BARBARIAN CHILDREN. HE REPORTED THAT THEY POSSESSED EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES--ONE BOY SMASHED BOULDERS TO POWDER AND FLEW THROUGH THE AIR! WITH THEM IN MY SERVICE, I'D HAVE BEEN INVINCIBLE! NO POWER IN ROME COULD STAND AGAINST ME!〉
〈BUT THANKS TO LUCIUS AQUILLA, I'M FORCED TO UPHOLD THE LAW...
〈... AND DELIVER THEM TO THE ARENA.〉

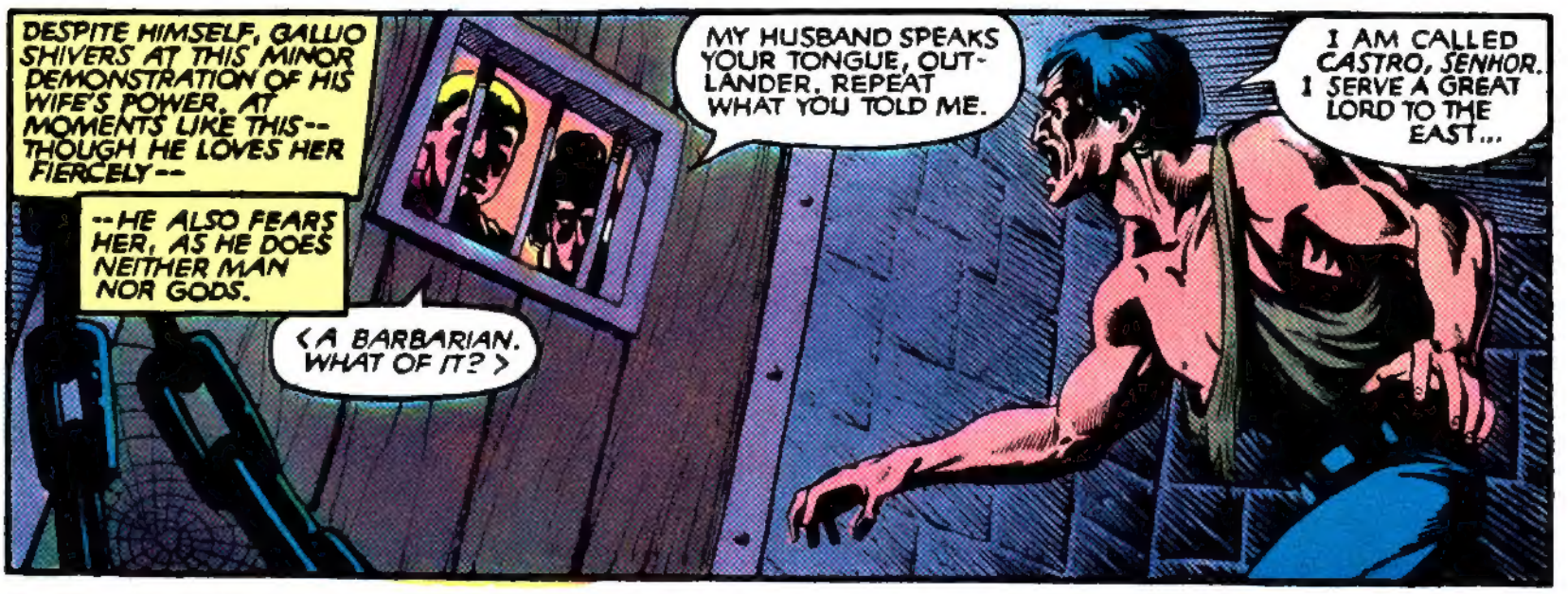
〈BUT HOW OFTEN HAVE I HEARD YOU CURSE HIM AND WISH HIM DEAD?〉
〈I CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT TASK WITH EASE.〉
〈NO, SELENE.〉

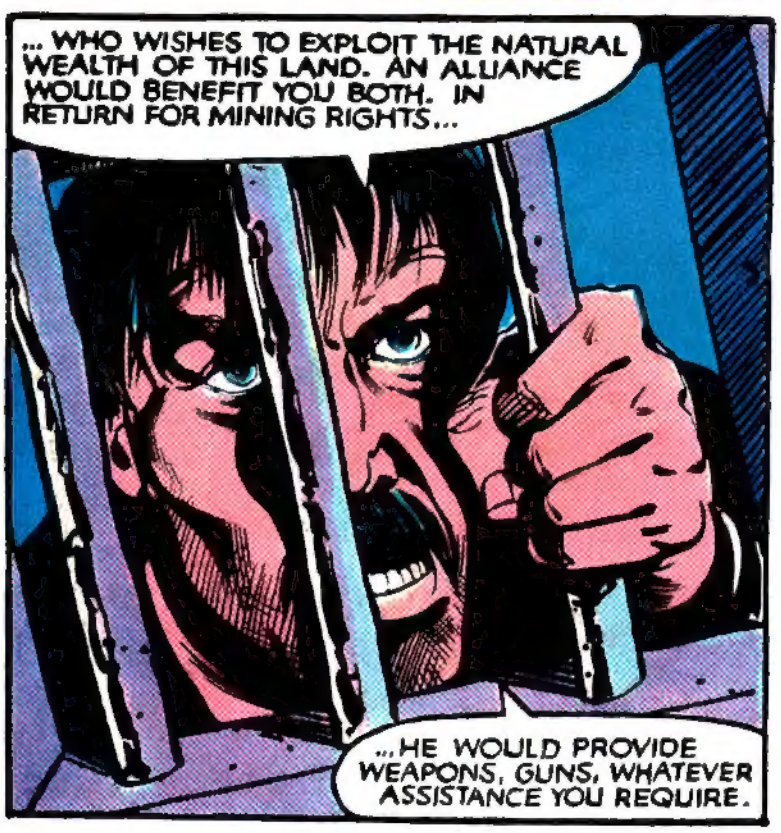
〈WHEN AQUILLA FALLS, I WANT IT TO BE BY MY HAND.〉
〈I WOULD RATHER NOT RESORT TO YOUR BLACK ARTS.〉
〈THE DAY WILL COME, ROMAN-- AND SOONER THAN YOU THINK--〉
〈--WHEN MY BLACK ARTS MAY BE YOUR ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION, AND VICTORY!〉

〈WHERE ARE WE GOING?〉
〈THE CATACOMBS, BENEATH OUR VILLA.〉
〈SINCE YOU REFUSE MY ARTS ARCANE...〉

〈... I MUST RESORT TO OTHER MEANS TO VANQUISH YOUR ENEMIES AND WIN FOR YOU THE IMPERIAL THRONE YOU CRAVE.
〈AFTER ALL, IS IT NOT A WIFE'S DUTY TO SERVE HER HUSBAND, IN ALL THINGS?〉


A GESTURE, A WHISPERED COMMAND, AND IN A BURST OF BLINDING LIGHT...
...A STRETCH OF BLANK WALL TRANSFORMS INTO A DOOR.


DESPITE HIMSELF, GALLIO SHIVERS AT THIS MINOR DEMONSTRATION OF HIS WIFE'S POWER. AT MOMENTS LIKE THIS-- THOUGH HE LOVES HER FIERCELY--
--HE ALSO FEARS HER, AS HE DOES NEITHER MAN NOR GODS.
〈A BARBARIAN. WHAT OF IT?〉
MY HUSBAND SPEAKS YOUR TONGUE, OUTLANDER. REPEAT WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
I AM CALLED CASTRO, SENHOR. I SERVE A GREAT LORD TO THE EAST...


... WHO WISHES TO EXPLOIT THE NATURAL WEALTH OF THIS LAND. AN ALLIANCE WOULD BENEFIT YOU BOTH. IN RETURN FOR MINING RIGHTS...
...HE WOULD PROVIDE WEAPONS, GUNS, WHATEVER ASSISTANCE YOU REQUIRE.

〈AN INTRIGUING PROPOSITION. YOU WERE QUITE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE US, SELENE.〉
〈BRING HIM UPSTAIRS, PROVIDE FOOD, WINE, PROPER ATTIRE-- BUT FIRST, GIVE THE WRETCH A BATH, HE SMELLS AWFUL!
〈THERE, IN THOSE MORE COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS, WE THREE SHALL CONTINUE OUR TALK.〉

THE HOUSE OF WOMEN, ADJACENT TO THE JULIAN CIRCUS...

...WHERE FEMALE SLAVES ARE HOUSED BEFORE THEIR SALE..

...AND WHEREIN THEY RECEIVE THE BEST OF CARE...

...SO THAT THEY MAY BRING THE BEST POSSIBLE PRICE.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE YOUR HAIR'S COLOR AND TEXTURE--!

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY, AN' IT NEVER, EVER GROWS -- EXCEPT WHEN IT'S CUT AND THEN ONLY T' THIS LENGTH.

I ENVY YOU YUIR HAIR, DANI!

YOU NEVER HAD TO WASH OR COMB IT, KIDDO.

THIS CAN BE A REAL PAIN WHEN IT GETS TANGLED.

COULD Y' NOT CUT IT, THEN?

AND LOOK LIKE YOU-- HEY!

GIRLS --

WOULD YOU CARE FOR MORE WINE?

Oooh-- YUM!

DON'T DRINK SO MUCH, DANI! THE WINE IS *DRUGGED!*

ARE YOU KIDDING? ARE THERE SECONDS?

THIS STUFF REALLY HITS THE SPOT!

WHOOO--*giggle!*--THE WORLD'S SPINNING! I BET--*giggle!*-- I'M TIPSY. WE'RE BEING NAUGHTY GIRLS, RAHNY, PROFESSOR X WON'T APPROVE.

D'YOU THINK--*giggle!*-- HE'LL YELL AT US?

BIG DEAL! WE'LL YELL BACK LOUDER!

(TOO LATE. THE DRUG'S TAKEN EFFECT.)

< I GAVE THEM AN EXTRA DOSE, MELANTHA, AS YOU ORDERED. I THINK IT'S HAVING THE DESIRED RESULT.

< THEY'RE TO BE DRUGGED AGAIN AT BREAKFAST. >

< THAT WAY, THEY'LL BE CHEERING RIGHT ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE CROWD... >

<...WHEN THEIR COMPANIONS FIGHT EACH OTHER TO THE DEATH.>

< OH, NO! >

< I DAREN'T TRY ANYTHING NOW-- TOO MANY PEOPLE UP AND ABOUT-- I'LL HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL THEY'RE ASLEEP. >

AND SO...

< FATHER'LL HAVE APOPLEXY WHEN HE SEES ME. HE SENT ME INTO THE OUTLANDS YEARS AGO TO SAVE ME FROM THE BLACK PRIESTESS AND HER UNHOLY FIRE CULT. >

< I WAS TO STAY AWAY 'TIL HE DISCOVERED HER TRUE IDENTITY AND CRUSHED HER EVIL FOREVER. >

< I SHOULD HAVE TOLD THE MUTANTS. THEY SENSED I WAS HIDING SOMETHING. THEY PROBABLY DON'T TRUST ME AS A RESULT. >

< IT MUST BE WONDERFUL TO BE BRAVE AND UNAFRAID AS THEY ARE. I'M SO SCARED, MY HEART'S POUNDING SO HARD I'M CERTAIN IT'LL BURST! >

< FATHER'LL PROTECT US, THOUGH, NO MATTER WHAT. >

DANI, RAHNE-- WAKE UP!

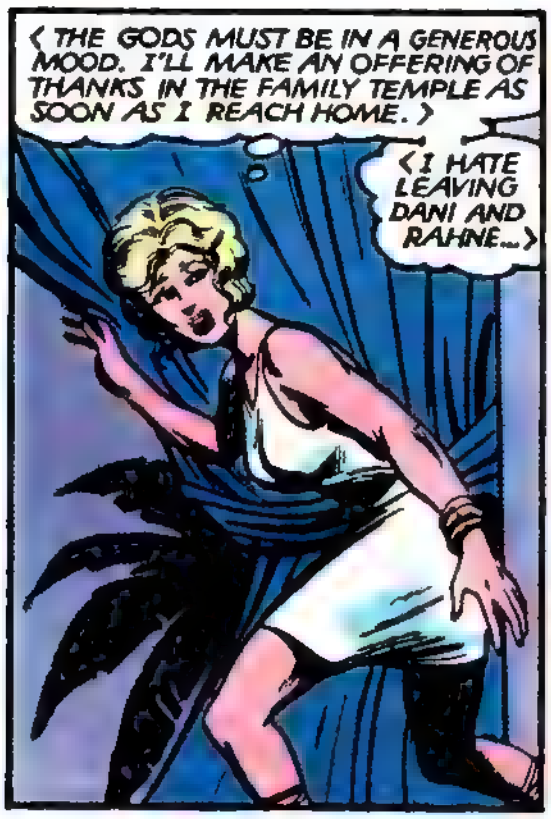
G'WAY, WE'RE SLEEPIN'.

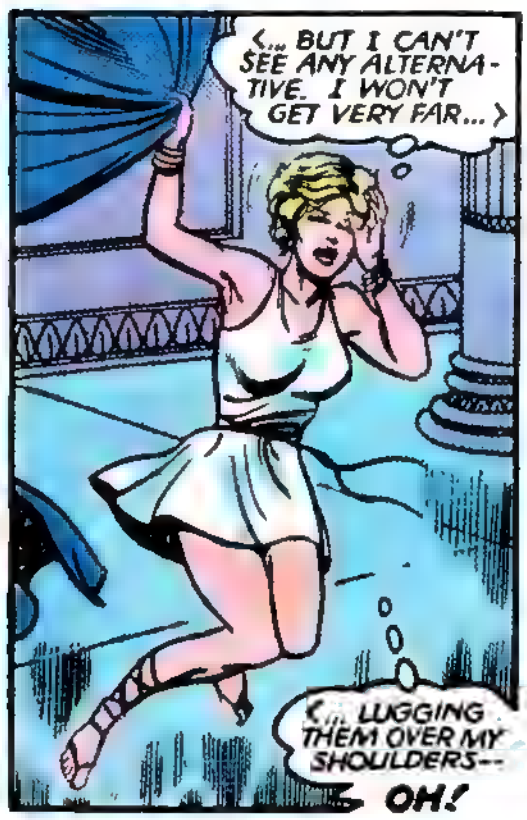
WE MUST ESCAPE FROM HERE, TONIGHT!

LISTEN TO ME! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF YOUR FATE ONCE YOU'RE SOLD?! A LIFETIME IN THE FIELDS, OR SOMEONE'S HOUSEHOLD-- AND MINERVA PROTECT YOU IF YOUR MASTER FINDS YOU ATTRACTIVE!

< IT'S NO USE. THE DRUG HAS DULLED THEIR MINDS. ONLY A VERY LITTLE IS NEEDED TO PRODUCE THE EFFECT, AND THEY DRANK A LOT. >

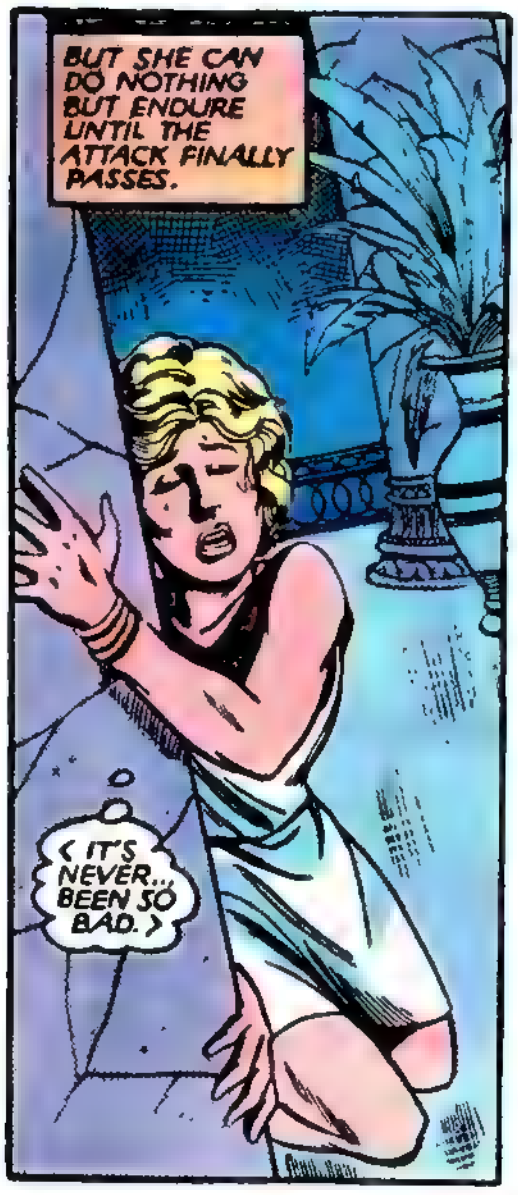
< I ONLY TASTED MINE. I WISH I KNEW WHY IT DIDN'T AFFECT ME. >


〈 THE GODS MUST BE IN A GENEROUS MOOD. I'LL MAKE AN OFFERING OF THANKS IN THE FAMILY TEMPLE AS SOON AS I REACH HOME. 〉
〈 I HATE LEAVING DANI AND RAHNE... 〉


〈... BUT I CAN'T SEE ANY ALTERNATIVE. I WON'T GET VERY FAR... 〉
〈... LUGGING THEM OVER MY SHOULDERS--
OH!

〈 DIDN'T MEAN TO CRY OUT... COULDN'T HELP... MYSELF... 〉
〈 WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?! SO WEAK... DIZZY... 〉
〈... CAN'T STAND... 〉

〈 SUDDENLY FEEL... SO HOT-- I'M ON FIRE INSIDE! 〉
〈 IT HURTS SO MUCH! 〉
SHE WANTS TO SCREAM, TO DIE -- ANYTHING TO END THE AGONY.


BUT SHE CAN DO NOTHING BUT ENDURE UNTIL THE ATTACK FINALLY PASSES.
〈 IT'S NEVER... BEEN SO BAD. 〉

〈 THE ATTACKS -- COMING MORE OFTEN, EACH WORSE THAN THE ONE BEFORE -- AM I DISEASED?! AM I ACCURSED?!! 〉
〈 AT LEAST NO ONE HEARD ME. I'D BEST GET A MOVE ON, WORRY ABOUT ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME. 〉
〈 WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE! 〉
〈 YOU! 〉

〈 HOW FLATTERING, AMARA. AFTER ALL THIS TIME, YOU REMEMBER ME. 〉
〈 YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW GLAD I AM THAT OUR PATHS HAVE FINALLY CROSSED. 〉
〈 YOU ARE A GIFT FROM THE GODS I SHALL MAKE VERY GOOD USE OF. 〉

AT THAT MOMENT, BENEATH THE CIRCUS...

< ONCE MORE, FALCO. MY TIMING'S STILL OFF. >

< YOU'LL HAVE TO DO A LOT BETTER THAN THIS IN THE ARENA, MY FRIEND. >

< I'M JUST USING MY TRIDENT FOR OUR WARM-UP. >

<OUT THERE, I'LL HAVE THE NET AS WELL. >

ANY LUCK WITH THOSE CHAINS, BOBBY?

NO... USE, SAM!

I CAN'T SUMMON MY POWER... TO BREAK THEM.

IT'S THE DRUG THAT MAKES YOU WEAK, TO KEEP YOU OUT OF MISCHIEF 'TIL THE GAMES.

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

PLUCKY LITTLE LAD, AREN'T YOU?

YOU FIGHT, BOY.

US, FOR STARTERS.

IF YOU SURVIVE, YOU'LL HAVE PROVEN YOURSELVES WORTHY...

...TO BECOME *SLAVES* OF NOVA ROMA.

YOU LUCKY, LIKE US, YOU MEBBE GET CHANCE TO EARN FREEDOM, BECOME CITIZENS.

HARDLY SEEMS A FAIR MATCH...

...WITH US BEIN' DRUGGED.

DON'T WORRY, OUTLANDER. WHEN THE *LANISTA'S* FINISHED HIS WORK...

...YOU'LL BE READY AND WILLING TO TAKE ON AN ARMY BARE-HANDED!

BY NOON, THE CIRCUS IS FILLED TO CAPACITY, PATRICIANS AND PLEBIANS ALL EAGERLY ANTICIPATING THE SHOW TO COME...

...EXCHANGING GOSSIP, FLIRTING, ARGUING, PLACING BETS ON GLADIATORIAL CONTESTS AND CHARIOT RACES, ON WHO WILL LIVE AND WHO WILL DIE.

THE OFFICIAL START OF THE DAY'S EVENTS IS SIGNALLED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE EDITOR--THE SPONSOR AND CEREMONIAL MASTER OF THE GAMES--

--SENATOR MARCUS DOMITIUS GALLIO AND HIS WIFE, THE INCA LADY SELENE.

ACCOMPANYING THEM ARE DANIELLE MOONSTAR AND RAHNE SINCLAIR...

...BOTH RADIANTLY BEAUTIFUL, LOOKING LIKE YOUNG PRINCESSES.

ONLY THEIR GLAZED EYES AND LANGUID MOVEMENTS BETRAY THE DRUGS USED TO KEEP THEM COMPLIANT. NOTHING THEY SEE OR FEEL BOTHERS THEM...

...BECAUSE THEY DON'T BELIEVE IT'S REAL. THEY THINK THIS IS ALL A FANTASTIC DREAM AND, IF THINGS GET TOO NASTY, THEY'LL ESCAPE BY SIMPLY WAKING UP.

BY THE TIME THEY LEARN THE TRUTH, IT'LL BE TOO LATE.

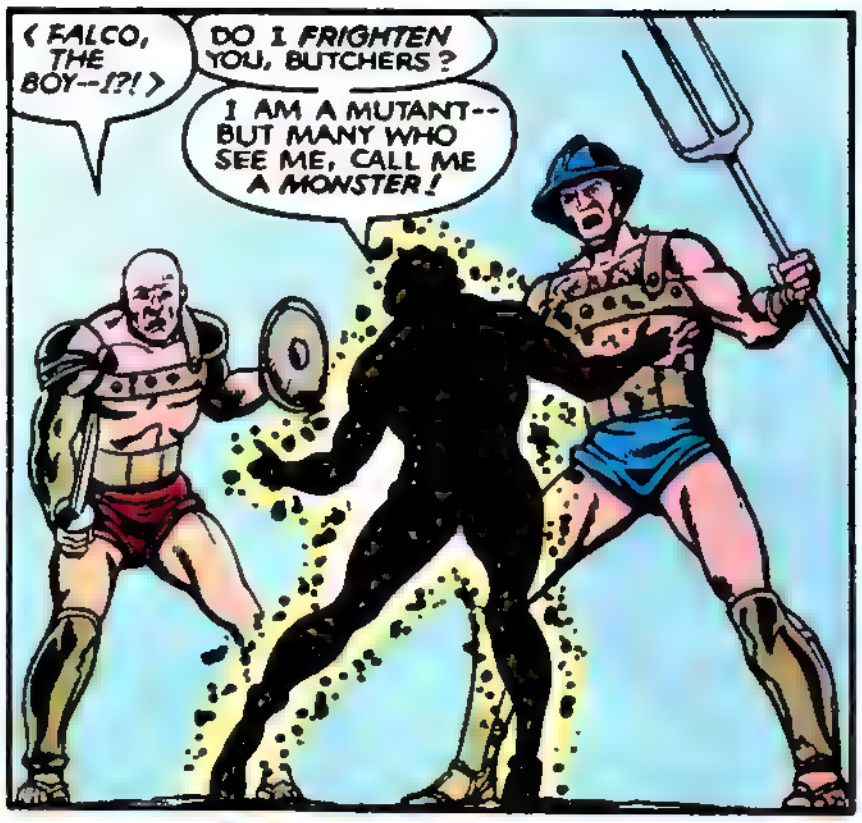
A FANFARE OF TRUMPETS ANNOUNCES THE GLADIATORS--

--THE RETARIUS FALCO, WITH NET AND TRIDENT, AND THE SECUTOR ROGIER.

<ALL HONOR TO THE SENATE AND PEOPLE AND GLORY OF ROME!>

<WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE SALUTE YOU!>

HOLD STILL, BRAT!
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?! LET US GO!
ALL IN GOOD TIME, LADDIE-BUCK.
FIRST, THOUGH--
--WE'RE GONNA WET YOUR WHISTLES!
QUIT STRUGGLING, BOY, YOU'LL ONLY MAKE IT HARDER ON YOURSELF.
WE'RE BOTH TOO WEAK, CAN'T TRIGGER OUR POWERS.
THAT WINE-- TASTED SO BITTER-- IT WAS LACED WITH SOMETHING!
YOU *DRUGGED* US!
WE DID, INDEED, OUTLANDER. THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE PAID GOOD MONEY TO SEE A GOOD SHOW.
IT'S MY JOB NOT TO DISAPPOINT 'EM.
IN A MINUTE OR SO, YOU'LL BOTH BE CONSUMED BY AN IRRESISTIBLE BERSERKER FURY THAT'LL GIVE YOU A MADMAN'S STRENGTH...
...ENDURANCE, AN' RESISTANCE TO PAIN...
...TO COMPENSATE FOR YOUR LACK OF SKILL AT ARMS.
YOU COULD BE TORN TO RIBBONS-- OR DO THE SAME TO SOMEONE ELSE— AND YOU WON'T FEEL A THING. YOU'LL ONLY STOP WHEN YOU'RE MAIMED OR KILLED, OR YOU'VE RUN OUT OF OPPONENTS.
FIGHT WELL, SLAVES.
BOBBY, RESIST THE DRUG!
WE'RE NOT KILLERS!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, SAM.

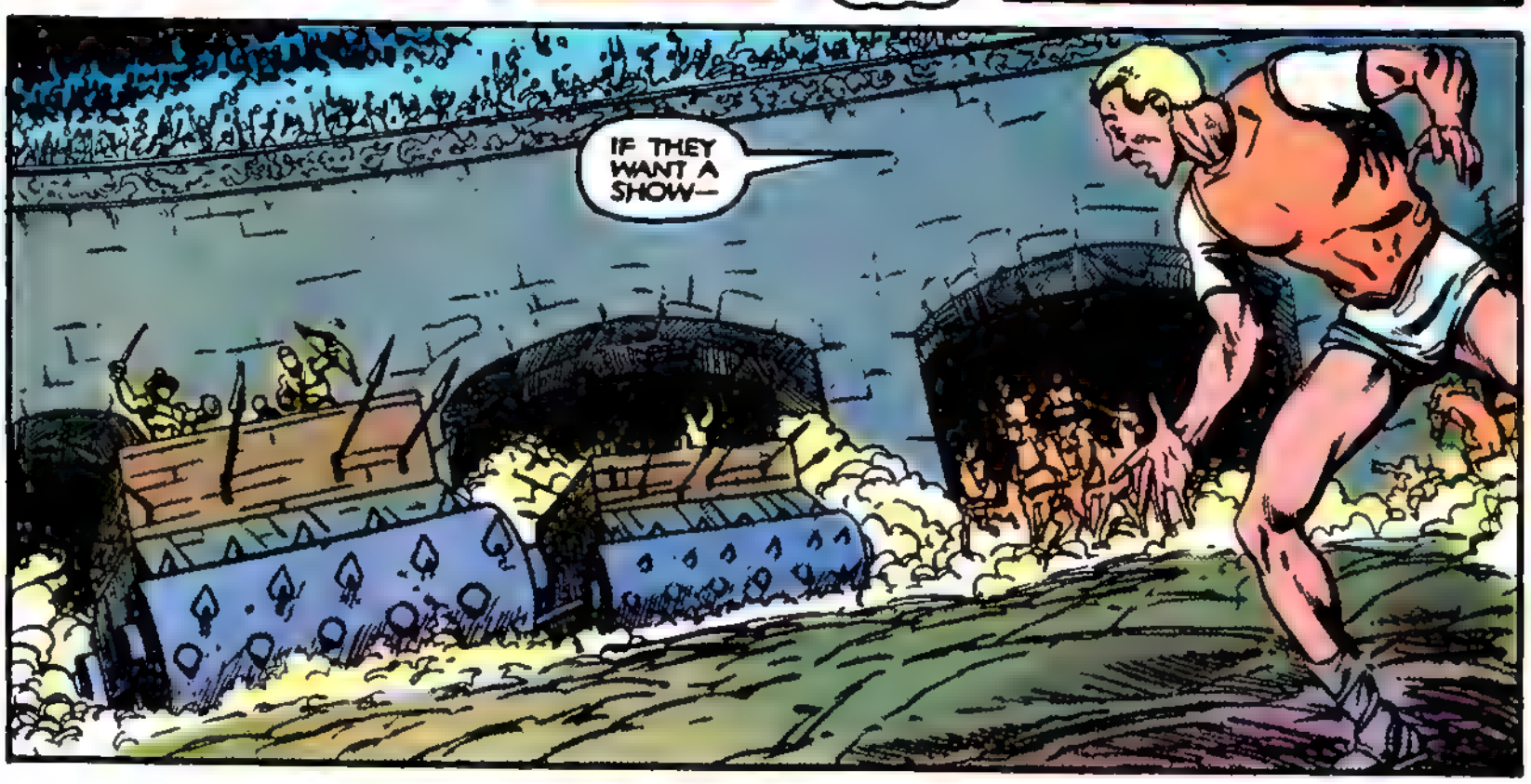

(FALCO, THE BOY--!?!)
DO I FRIGHTEN YOU, BUTCHERS ?
I AM A MUTANT-- BUT MANY WHO SEE ME, CALL ME A MONSTER !

PERHAPS, THIS DAY, I'LL PROVE THEM RIGHT !

(HE -- FELLED THEM WITH A SINGLE BLOW !)
(I WAGER A THOUSAND SESTERCES, THE BOY DEFEATS ALL COMERS !)
(I'LL TAKE THAT BET !)
(AND I !)

THE DUMMIES DON'T REALIZE THE DANGER-- BOBBY AN' I COULD PROB'LY FLATTEN THIS PLACE !
AND WHY NOT?! THEY WANT TO MAKE US SLAVES !
NO ! AH MUSTN'T THINK THAT WAY ! BUT... SO HARD...

"...TO MAINTAIN CONTROL.
"THE GIRLS !
"THEY'RE ENJOYIN' THIS AS MUCH AS THE CROWD !


IF THEY WANT A SHOW--

— AH'LL GIVE 'EM ONE THEY'LL NEVER FORGET!!

MOST OF THE GLADIATORS SCRAMBLE TO SAFETY.

BUT NOT ALL.

HARRCH

THE BOYS TAKE NO NOTICE, AND DO NOT CARE.

THAT CHARIOT MEANS TO RUN ME DOWN!

ROBERTO FALLS BENEATH THUNDERING HOOVES.

THE RISK IS CONSIDERABLE. HIS POWER MAKES HIM SUPER-STRONG, BUT NOT INVULNERABLE.

SOME GASP IN HORROR...

...OTHERS CHEER...

... THINKING HIM TRAMPLED.

BUT THEN...

YYYIIIIII!!

CRASH!

AS ROBERTO ELIMINATES THE TWO CHARIOTS...

...SAM TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE SECOND "TANK"...

...WITH EQUALLY DEVASTATING RESULTS.

SKRAM!

UNFORTUNATELY...

WHUNFF!!

< I DO NOT WISH TO BE AN ALARMIST, MARCUS DOMITIUS, BUT SUPPOSE THESE BARBARIANS TURN AGAINST US... ? >

< FOR ALL THEIR POWER, MY DEAR GAIUS... >

< ... THEY REMAIN ONLY HUMAN. SHOULD THINGS GET OUT OF HAND, FIVE-SCORE CRACK ARCHERS STAND READY... >

< ... TO SEND THEM TO THEIR ANCESTORS. >

WHEN FIRST WE MET, GUTHRIE, YOU STRUCK FROM BEHIND-- LIKE A COWARD!

I SEE NOW HOW EASILY YOU REVERT TO TYPE !

WANNA MAKE SOMETHIN' OF IT, SHRIMP ?!

BOOM!

AS SELF-PROTECTION WHEN HE'S BLASTING, CANNONBALL'S POWER AUTOMATICALLY MAKES HIM INVULNERABLE.

THAT ALONE SAVES HIM FROM BEING SPLATTERED ALL OVER THE ARENA BY SUNSPOT'S PUNCH--WHICH WOULD HAVE PULVERIZED A FAIR-SIZED BUILDING.

THE IMPACT FLATTENS BOTH BOYS, THE PHYSICAL SHOCK SO GREAT IT TOTALLY DRAINS THEIR POWERS.

BUT THEIR FIGHT IS FAR FROM OVER.

BY RIGHTS, THEY SHOULD BE TOO WEAK TO STAND...

...BUT THEIR DRUG-BORN, BERSERKER RAGE DRIVES THEM ON.

THE FACT THAT THEY ARE FRIENDS MEANS AS LITTLE TO THEM...

...AS TO RAHNE SINCLAIR...

KILL HIM, MY LOVE!

KILL HIM!!

SAM HAS THE EDGE IN SIZE...

...AND USES IT TO GOOD ADVANTAGE...

...UNTIL ROBERTO BEGINS TO RECOVER...

...THE USE OF HIS POWER.

NO, NOT HIM -- HE MUST NA' BE HARMED!

I MUST SAVE HIM!

STAY WHERE YOU ARE, GIRL!

YOU'LL BE PART OF THE SHOW SOON ENOUGH.

LET ME GO, CURSE YOU!

MY LOVE IS IN PERIL...

...AN' I'LL NOT LET THE LIKE O' YOU-- OR ANYONE --

--KEEP ME FROM HIS SIDE!

AS RAHNE RESUMES HER LUPINE PERSONA...

...SHE ALSO ACTIVATES THE SPECIAL MINDLINK BETWEEN HER AND DANI...

...AN OUTGROWTH OF THE PSIONIC RAPPORT THE YOUNG CHEYENNE SHARES WITH ALL ANIMALS.

THE BOYS HAVE GONE CRAZY! AND SO HAS RAHNE!

I -- I WAS CHEERING THEM ON.

IN THEIR FRENZY, THEY'LL MURDER EACH OTHER--

--UNLESS I CAN STOP THEM, I NEED TO SHOCK THEM OUT OF THEIR DRUGGED STATE...

... AS RAHNE'S SHAPESHIFT DID ME. THAT MEANS SUMMONING A SPECIFIC SPIRIT FORM FROM THEIR MINDS...

...SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE!

P-PROFESSOR XAVIER ?!?

Bullpen Bulletins

¡BUENOS DIAS!

Guess who was a guest of honor at the 3rd Annual *Salón del Comic y la Ilustracion*, Barcelona, Spain's huge, international comics convention? *¡Si, yo!* Yes, me!

Hundreds of comics professionals and thousands upon thousands of fans turned out. What a show!

Representatives of dozens of comics publishers from around the world showed up there, too. Because many of them publish translated editions of Marvel Comics, our work is known almost everywhere, and I was pleased to discover that Marvel and the Marvel creative crew are held in very high regard overseas. As Editor in Chief of Marvel, I was very warmly received and treated with a great deal of respect at the fair. I felt very proud and extremely honored!

In Spain, many Marvel titles are published by *Editorial Forum*, a very prestigious publishing house – and they do a terrific job with our stuff (as well as their own). My counterpart at *Forum*, their Editor in Chief, is a very knowledgeable, skilled and professional gentleman named Antonio Martin, with whom I spoke several times. I'd like to take this opportunity to publically declare Antonio and his crew Honorary Bullpenners!

HOME AGAIN.

...for about thirty seconds, then it was off to Tulsa, Oklahoma to appear at *Tulsa Con '83*, hosted by the Tulsa Believers in Comics Fandom. That, my friends, is one terrific group of people, and they throw an outstanding convention. If you're interested in joining a great, active, downright *fun* comics club, or if you'd like info on their next event, write to the club president at this address:

Larry Thomas
3836 East 21st
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114

Oh, and by the way, Tulsa is the hometown of *EPIC Illustrated Magazine* Editorial Director, *Archie Goodwin*. He would have pouted all day if I hadn't mentioned that.

HOME AGAIN AGAIN!

For a whole couple of weeks this time. You know, there's something funny going on around this place. As you may have heard, me and *all* of the Marvel editors are going away to conventions during the month of August. That means that all of the comics which go on sale in September, bearing a January cover date, will be handled entirely by the seconds-in-command... the *assistant editors*. So, around here, the month of the September-on-sale-January-cover-date issues has become known as *Assistant Editors' Month*.

Now, those guys could, and probably *should* just caretake the books for that one month, but rumor has it that they've planned a whole bunch of... let's say *unusual* stuff. They're trying to, in one month, *revolutionize* comics.

Apparently they've enlisted the cooperation of the artists and writers because there are a *lot* of very secret, closed-door meetings going on around here lately, and, nobody, but *nobody* is letting on to the editors... or me... what's planned for those January cover-date issues.

I'm not kidding. Assistant Editors' Month was an amusing notion, and we've all had some laughs talking about it, but I think it may be getting a little out of hand. I'm genuinely concerned about this and I may have to put my foot down and put a stop to it. What do you think? What would you do?

Just for your info, here's a list of the people I'm talking about:

Danny Fingeroth's assistant	Bob Budiansky's assistant
BOB DeNATALE	MIKE HIGGINS
Amazing Spider-Man	*Fantastic Four*
Peter Parker	*Daredevil*
Marvel Team-Up	*Return of the Jedi*
Ka-Zar	

Mark Gruenwald's assistant	Carl Potts's assistant
MIKE CARLIN	ANN NOCENTI
Avengers	*Hulk*
Iron Man	*Defenders*
Thor	*Doctor Strange*
Captain America	*Fanfare*
	The Thing
Ralph Macchio's assistant	Larry Hama's assistant
BOB HARRAS	JIM OWSLEY
Dazzler	*Conan*
US 1	*King Conan*
Micronauts	*Savage Sword*
What If	
ROM	
Crystar	
Denny O'Neil's assistant	Louise Jones' assistant
LINDA GRANT	ELIOT BROWN
Alpha Flight	*X-Men*
Power Man Iron Fist	*New Mutants*
G.I. Joe	*Star Wars*
Moon Knight	*Indiana Jones*

Those are the potential perpetrators – some of them you may know a little about from seeing a bit of their published writing, art, lettering, etc. – others are strictly unknown quantities to you, since all their work has been behind the scenes. Tell me, would *you* haul the lot of them up short and squelch their plans? Or trust them, and see what comes out in September? It may be too late already to do anything else.

Those January cover date issues may be some real one-of-a-kind collectors' items.

Anyway, stay well!

Jim Shooter

THE HYPE BOX

THOR ANNUAL #11 — Ever wonder what it's like to grow up in Asgard? It can sure be a blast, but it certainly isn't easy, especially if you happen to be the god of thunder. ALAN ZELENENTZ, BOB HALL, and VINCE COLLETTA reveal the early life of the mighty **Thor** for the first time, from his birth to the appearance of **Don Blake**. Don't miss this one!

DEFENDERS #125 — A cataclysmic shake-up in the world's greatest non-team. The Defenders must disband in order to save the Earth, but is mankind ready for the *new* Defenders? Who are they? Well, three of 'em used to be **X-Men**! The rest – well, you'll have to see for yourself in this very special double-sized issue. by J.M. DeMATTEIS, DON PERLIN, and KIM DeMULDER, with an original cover *painting* by BILL SIEKIEWICZ.

X-MEN #175 Is Madelyne Pryor really Jean Grey? Is she **Dark Phoenix**? Are you crazy enough to even *consider* missing this issue? It's double-sized, double excitement, and PAUL SMITH's final issue of the mag before JOHN ROMITA, JR. comes aboard. Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Inked by BOB WIACEK.

THE FALCON #1 (Limited Series) — The Falcon like you've never seen him, in a story like Marvel's never done before! A hard-hitting and gritty account of life on the city streets by JIM OWSLEY, PAUL SMITH, and VINCE COLLETTA.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ **THE THING #5**
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #200**
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #9**
- ☐ **DAZZLER #29**
- ☐ **KING CONAN #19**
- ☐ **RETURN OF THE JEDI #2 (Limited Series)**
- ☐ **THE FALCON #1 (Limited Series)**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT SPECIAL EDITION #1** – Reprinting the original **Moon Knight** epics, by DOUG MOENCH and BILL SIENKIEWICZ, from the **Hulk Magazine.**
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #246**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #287**
- ☐ **THOR #337**
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #11**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #34**
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #55**
- ☐ **CRYSTAR #4**
- ☐ **HAWKEYE #3 (Limited Series)**
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #289**
- ☐ **AVENGERS #237**
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #152**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #157** — Reprinting **Amazing Spider-Man #19** by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO. "Spidey Strikes Back!"
- ☐ **X-MEN #175**
- ☐ **ROM #48**
- ☐ **POWER MAN/IRON FIST #99**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #17**
- ☐ **CLOAK & DAGGER #2 (Limited Series)**
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #260**
- ☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP #135** — Spider-Man and Kitty Pryde
- ☐ **IRON MAN #176**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #125**
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #84**
- ☐ **STAR WARS #77**
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #4**
- ☐ **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #11**
- ☐ **MARVEL TAILS #1** – Funny animals — Marvel style! Featuring the origin of the **Hulk-Bunny**! By TOM DeFALCO, MARK ARMSTRONG, and JOE ALBELO.
- ☐ **KRULL #1 (Limited Series)** – Marvel's adaptation of the Columbia Pictures summertime smash space fantasy! By DAVID MICHELINIE and BRET BLEVINS. Inks by VINCE COLLETTA.

MARVEL ANNUALS

- ☐ **IRON MAN ANNUAL #6** — **Iron Man** reduced to a pawn in the struggle between the **Eternals** and the **Deviants.**
- ☐ **THOR ANNUAL #11** – For the first time in one comic: the story of **Thor's** life, from birth to the arrival of **Don Blake.**

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #93**
- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #8**
- ☐ **BLIP #8**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #11**

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #20**
- ☐ **DREADSTAR #6**

TOO BAD YOU'RE ONLY AN ILLUSION, PROF. I'D'VE LIKED YOU TO SEE MY BIG MOMENT.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'VE A FEELING WE BADLY NEED YOUR HELP.

YOU ... OKAY, BOBBY? AH'M REAL SORRY, MAN, F'R WHAT AH SAID AN' DID...

LATER, SAM ASSUMING WE LIVE THAT LONG. THE NATIVES ARE LOOKING VERY RESTLESS.

BY THE WAY, I'M SORRY, TOO.

〈THEY ARE SPAWN OF THE BLACK PRIESTESS— DEMONS!〉

〈ARCHERS, OPEN FIRE! DESTROY THEM!〉

〈SENATOR GALLIO, WE AWAIT YOUR ORDERS!〉

〈LAY DOWN YOUR BOWS!〉

〈CITIZENS OF NOVA ROMA, THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR FEAR — BUT FOR REJOICING!〉

〈OUR MOST ANCIENT PROPHECY HAS BEEN FULFILLED. AND AS EDITOR OF THESE MOST SACRED GAMES, I BESTOW ON THESE CHILDREN...〉

〈...THE LAUREL WREATH OF TRIUMPH!〉

〈BEHOLD, CITIZENS, THE ONE WHOSE HAIR MARKS HER AS A DESCENDENT OF OUR DIVINE PATRON, GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR! AND WHOSE MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION REVEALS HER TO BE OF THE SAME BLOOD...〉

〈...AS THE SHE-WOLF WHO SUCKLED ROMULUS AND REMUS, FOUNDERS OF MOTHER ROME HERSELF! THESE ARE NOT CHILDREN OF MEN, BUT OF THE IMMORTAL GODS -- AND I WELCOME THEM AMONG US!

THEY'RE CHEERING!

HEAR THAT, RAHNE, EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE JUST FINE!

MAYBE SO, DANI.

BUT AH'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN AH SEE IT.

NEXT ISSUE:

BETRAYAL!

MUTANT MAIL

℅ MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
ELIOT BROWN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In our initial lettercol, we asked for suggestions for a title for this letters' page. Suggestions poured in — and now we have a winner, whose letter and entry is presented below. Take a bow, David, it's well-deserved.

Dear Louise:

I see that you're taking suggestions for the lettercol title. Permit me to enter one.

Point one: the characters in this book are supposed to be in a school. That's why Xavier brought them together.

Point two: we, the readers, know that these students are mutants. That information is in the book's title. You don't have to hit us over the head with that info in the lettercol title, too.

Point three: the purpose of a lettercol is so that you, the creative team, get feedback from the readers as to how you are doing on said book.

Taking those points into consideration, what title could be more appropriate than:

"REPORT CARD"

David Schifferdecker
RR 1/Hepler, Kansas 66746

Dear Louise and Chris:

Each issue is better than the last.

John Brittan
11 Fleetwood Dr.
Daly City, CA 94015

Thanks for telling us, John — now tell your friends!

Dear Louise,

NEW MUTANTS #4, "Who's Scaring Stevie," was a very good story — in fact, it was excellent. What I liked about it was the way it used a major problem in the United States, namely child abuse, to further develop the Mutants as a team and as individual characters. The psychological effects on our young created by child abusing parents is a serious problem, and I think it showed the readers a small picture of how serious a problem it can be. The Professor was right when he said that something may be learned from every situation. In this issue, the New Mutants learn that even people who appear to be the most normal can have greater problems than theirs, and that the only way in dealing with problems is by facing up to them, no matter how much it hurts.

This could have been just another story to fill space, but it wasn't. It took a serious problem and made a special story that touched thousands of your readers and made them think. I hope that future issues are as great as this one. Thank you.

Charles Fields
3706 Edmondson Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21229

Dear Louise Jones:

"Who's Scaring Stevie?" (NEW MUTANTS #4) was a very, very unique twist on the childhood crush theme.

Many writers would've been satisfied with the simplistic suspense ploy of having a love-sick youth use telephone threats to attain a sort of peurile retaliation for unrequited "crush." Instead, the last three pages of the book gave us a serious, if not grave, insight into something so many children face — physical disciplinary action by a parent.

The book's really coming along. Sal and Bob's renderings were great, especially the effective use of screens.

Kevin J. Dooley
132 1/2 North Berendo St.
Los Angeles, CA 90004

Dear Mr. Claremont:

To be honest, Peter Bristow does not seem any more mentally ill to me than Rousseau — who developed many of the ideas our democracy was based on — or Elvis Presley. Considering Bristow's situation, he adapted to the confused brutality of his parents better than Ernst Roehm, at least. That's something.

After all, an obscene phone call is normally no big deal. I've had kids try that game on me. Generally it's best to treat it as a joke, not let some fool raise your blood pressure. If they keep it up, try what a friend of mine did. She kept a police whistle by her phone. Next time he called, she just popped an earringing toot into the receiver. The phone jerk never called her again, so it seems to work.

Maybe that would have done little for Bristow, but as Lao Tzu put it: "Better to stop short than fill one's cup past the brim."

Jim Scribner
83 Summer St.
New Canaan, CT 06840

Chris Claremont has some very strong feelings on this point, Jim, and we thought we'd give him a chance to express them below.

Some fascinating points, Jim. You suggesting that Rousseau, had he access to current technology, would have made obscene/threatening phone calls?

To the victims of this story — both Stevie and Peter — the fact that Peter adapted well to his parental/home environment is probably little comfort. The fact remains that, in dealing with the world as he thought it dealt with him, he hurt innocent people, including himself. More importantly, Peter's calls were not obscene — in that he made sexual remarks — they were threats. "You know what I want... I'm coming to get it." Stevie had no way of knowing whether or not they were legit or a prank — and that in itself became part of the nightmare.

Perhaps Peter could have turned out a lot worse. That isn't the point. He should never have been abused. Human life is to be cherished. To corrupt it, to warp either mind or body, is almost as great a crime as to destroy it.

— Chris

Thanks, Chris. And thanks, Jim, for the "whistle" idea — and the thought-provoking comments.

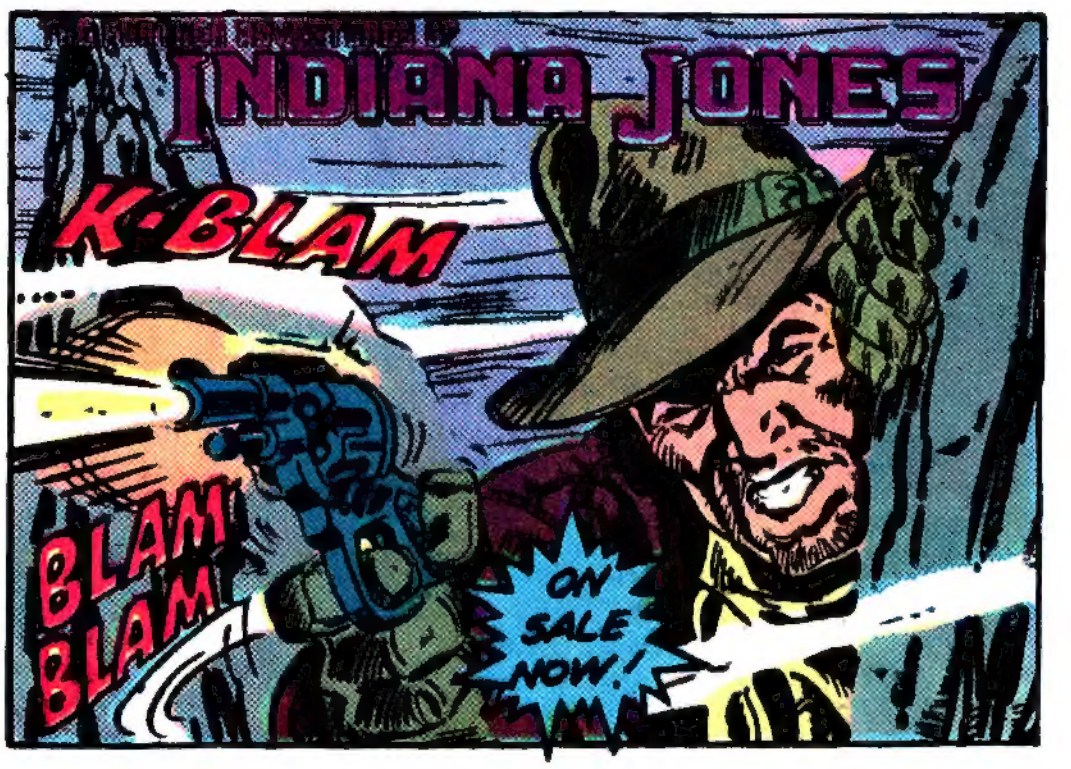
Dear Marvel,

I have one simple question to ask of you. If Rahne can't even handle a simple kid like this Peter Bristow, how is she going to stand up to super-villains such as Magneto, Dr. Doom or the Hellfire Club? The same goes for Dani, who, throughout the book, did nothing but talk and pull an image out of Peter's mind — of him and Stevie and of him being beaten by his father. I really don't think these two should be in this group, and if the evil mutants want them, I say let them have 'em!

Warren Folse
207 Lake Asheley Dr.
Blythewood, SC 29016

If you want to see the kids take on the Hellfire Club, Warren, we suggest you stay tuned for about four months. As for Rahne and Dani leaving the team, all things are possible, but we, at least, would kinda miss 'em! As they become more adept at handling their powers, they should strut their stuff a lot more — and more effectively! We hope that'll change your mind about them.

NEXT ISSUE: Where once they were slaves, now the New Mutants are heroes — and Rahne's been acclaimed a goddess! The kids couldn't be happier, right? Things couldn't be better? Guess again!



MINUTEMEN

Quick STOP

RST